# 2013 AHA Annual Meeting Program Synopses

## Friday, April 12

### The Birmingham Demonstrations: A *Becoming Alabama* Roundtable

Panelists:
Glen Eskew, Ph.D., Georgia State University
Jim Baggett, Archivist, Birmingham Public Library Archives
Barbara Shores, M.D., Birmingham
Dan Puckett, Ph.D., Troy University (Chair)

Perhaps no single Alabama event remains as fixed in the nation's memory as the demonstrations that rocked Birmingham in 1963. As the city, state, and national commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the events of that period of great tumult, victory, and unspeakable tragedy, the Alabama Historical Association will mark the occasion with a special roundtable discussion featuring both scholars and activists.

### Alabama Places

| | **"The Survival of Arlington, Birmingham's Antebellum House,"**<br>Carolyn Green Satterfield, Ph.D., Birmingham |
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| | How did Arlington, a 19th century Greek Revival home in Elyton, AL, survive Wilson's Raiders, the auction block, five different owners, renovations, and a mid-20th century city purchase? What part did the Arlington Historical Association have in its preservation, creating the museum house, and in continued support? What did larger than life men: Judge William S. Mudd and Robert S. Munger have in common? Still prominent on a hill, the museum house takes on a history of Alabama in the objects it displays |

| | **"Five Airfields of Tuskegee During World War II,"**<br>Daniel L. Haulman, Ph.D., Air Force Historical Research Agency |
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| | This paper describes the history, function, and physical characteristics of each of the five airfields around Tuskegee at which the only black pilots in the Army Air Forces trained during World War II: Kennedy Field where civilian pilot training took place, and where Eleanor Roosevelt flew with a black pilot for the first time; Moton Field, where primary flight training occurred, and which is the current Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site; Tuskegee Army Air Field, by far the largest and most important of the airfields, where basic, advanced, and transitional flying training took place; Griel Field, where liaison pilots were trained, and Shorter Field, which many of the black pilots used on their crucial solo flights from Tuskegee Army Air Field. These five |

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| | airfields link Alabama to the Tuskegee Airmen and the crucial role they placed in the long struggle for racial equality. |

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|  | **"Agriculture in the Antebellum Wiregrass,"**<br>Tommy C. Brown, Auburn University |
| | Historians have traditionally viewed antebellum south-central and southeastern Alabama as a poor, sparsely populated, majority-white, wilderness with few slaves and little interest in advancing planter class agendas. Yet, a closer examination of the evidence suggests that this largely overlooked region, known by contemporaries as the Pine Barrens, enjoyed vibrant social, economic, and political traditions. This presentation argues that, not unlike the Black Belt, the region's socioeconomic classes were more closely tied to slavery than previously understood. Nearly every family was touched by the institution in some way. Thus, by the outbreak of the Civil War, Pine Barren counties eagerly supported the Confederate war effort. |

## Alabama Biography I

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|  | **"Peter Brannon's Extra-Illustrated Copy of Philip Henry Gosse's *Letter from Alabama* (1859),"**<br>Gary R. Mullen, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus, Auburn University |
| | Philip Henry Gosse (1810-1888) was an English naturalist who spent eight months in the Black Belt in 1838 recording Alabama's natural history, frontier life, and early cotton plantations. Gosse recounted these experiences in *Letters from Alabama*, published in London in |

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| | 1859. State Archivist Peter A. Brannon (1882-1967) acquired a copy of *Letters from Alabama*, from which he removed the covers and binding in order to insert some 600 Gosse-related items between pages and in paper pockets glued to separate sheets. In 1922 he had it rebound in six volumes to accommodate the "extra illustrations." The presenter has had the opportunity to carefully examine Brannon's extra-illustrated copy while it was part of the private collection of a resident of Eufaula, AL, and, at the time, in the Eufaula Athenaeum. |

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|  <br>*Carriage Warehouse, Livery Stable & Blacksmith's Shop.*<br>W. A. FENN, respectfully informs his old customers and the public generally, that he has purchased the establishment formerly owned by S. P. Birdsey, and will continue to keep on hand, and for sale,<br>**Carriages, Buggies, &c. &c.**<br>of the latest style and fashion.<br>*Carriages, Harness and Saddles repaired at the shortest notice.*<br>The Livery Stable will be supplied at all times, with good, serviceable, gentle riding and harness horses, to hire upon the most liberal terms.<br>He will also keep up a blacksmith's shop, where he will be prepared to do any work in that line, at the shortest notice. | **"William A. Fenn and Eufaula's Lively Livery Stable Culture,"**<br>Angela Lakwete, Ph.D., Auburn University |
| | In June 1848 William A. Fenn bought out S. P. Birdsey and joined Eufaula's lively livery stable industry. Five partnerships and ten years later he was a wealthy "carriage maker," having worked in nearly every division of the business. The coming of the railroad in 1865 coincided with his return from war and with changes in the industry: the carriage trades had consolidated and livery stables had relocated to upscale hotels. This paper examines the industry through the life of Connecticut-born William A. Fenn. It argues that the industry adopted national modernizing trends while it retained regionally conservative practices, ironically offering entrepreneurial opportunity to freedmen in the Reconstruction Era. |

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|  | **"The Burdens of Justice: John McKinley and the Original Ninth Circuit,"**<br>Steven P. Brown, Ph.D., Auburn University |

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| | John McKinley was a wealthy lawyer, successful land speculator, and prominent politician in Alabama who served in both houses of Congress. He was appointed to the US Supreme Court by President Martin Van Buren in 1837, and assigned to the new Ninth Circuit. McKinley's lasting fame, such as it is, lies mostly in his frequent complaints regarding the difficulties of his circuit which encompassed Alabama, Arkansas, the eastern portion of Louisiana, and Mississippi. This paper contends that the large area, sparse population, and transportation challenges of the old Southwest made it impossible for any one man to cover. |

## Fighting Alabamians (and Some Georgians, too)

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|  | **"Not Here You Won't! Dueling Across State Lines,"**<br>Matthew A. Byron, Ph.D., Young Harris College |
| | The history of Georgia began with the arrival of James Oglethorpe and company in 1732. This history has been recounted often by historians. Yet, most historians overlook the arrival of another history to Georgia – the history of dueling. This study will provide the history of dueling in colonial Georgia while utilizing extensive statistical data compiled by the author. Through the use of this data, this paper will place Georgia's dueling history into the larger context of colonial America and set the stage for Georgia's persistent use of dueling during the 19th century. |

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| | **"'To Arms! To Arms!': Alabama's Response to the Mexican War,"**<br>Ronald Thomas, Abbeville |
| | When additional troops were needed to conduct the war in Mexico in 1846, Alabama Governor Joshua Martin was asked to raise a regiment of infantry consisting of ten companies of 80 privates each. Enthusiasm for this first real foreign U.S. war was high in Alabama, |

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| | but faulty assumptions, misunderstandings, geography, the nature of federal/state relations, and basic human nature combined to make Alabama's response to the Mexican War more a tragicomedy than the noble answer to a patriotic call that it might otherwise have been. The unpublished correspondence of Governor Martin, consisting primarily of letters received by him from across the state, reveals much about the way mid-nineteenth century Alabamians perceived themselves and their state's role in American military and political affairs. Personal reminiscences of the Mexican War add detail and substance to the sometimes confusing and often naïve communications between the governor and his constituents. Archives of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Alabama shed additional light on this colorful chapter of Alabama history. |

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|  | **"Fighting for College and Country: Birmingham-Southern in the Second World War,"**<br><br>C. Gates Janich, Birmingham-Southern College |
| | Following the attacks on Pearl Harbor, college and university administrators clamored for clear federal guidance to determine the wartime function of their institutions. As a small, denominational liberal arts college, Birmingham-Southern was particularly poised for ruin. What was to become of American Higher Education, which had heretofore been perceived as embodying the free ideals of Democracy, and how would institutions equip soldier-students with critical wartime skills while providing an American collegiate experience worth dying for? Primarily drawn from a collection of personal correspondence, military/collegiate contracts, and military/collegiate records held in the Birmingham-Southern Archives, this paper explores how the 'Hilltop' embarked upon an aggressive, trying campaign to acquire government sponsored military training programs (specifically the Army Air Forces 17th College Training Detachment) to combat the coming crisis of under-enrollment and serve a nation at war. |

# Saturday, April 13

## Towns and Mill Villages in Alabama

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|  | **"Town Development in Antebellum Alabama,"**<br>Evelyn D. Causey, Ph.D, Auburn |
| | This paper will provide an overview of town development in Alabama from American settlement until the Civil War, focusing on six communities: Auburn, Dadeville, Demopolis, Guntersville, Montevallo, and Mooresville. While only a small number of Alabamians spent their entire lives in towns, a much larger number visited them to conduct business or attend to legal matters. Other people lived in towns for portions of their lives, as students or while working as lawyers or store clerks. Life in antebellum towns was intimately connected to rural life, but for both free and enslaved Alabamians, town life was different from life on the plantation. This paper will consider how and where towns were founded, who lived and worked in these communities, and how town landscapes, society and culture changed over time. |

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|  | **"Donald Comer: Mill Owner,"**<br>Mike Breedlove, Ph.D., Alabama Department of Archives and History |
| | This talk with focus on Donald Comer's life, and also emphasize employee-employer relations in both Avondale and Cowikee Mills. In it, the multi-faceted nature of Donald Comer will be discussed, as well as some of his innovative approaches to labor-management relations. Comer's devotion to his family and cotton mills, to education and the Boy Scouts, his paternalism, and his larger |

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| | perspective of life through his military experience and his travels throughout the world will be covered as well. |

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| | **"Life on South Side: The Cowikee Mills Village and Its Residents, 1910-1940,"**<br>David E. Alsobrook, Ph.D, History Museum of Mobile |
| | Under Donald Comer's visionary leadership, Cowikee Mills' workers and their families built a 'town within a town" on Eufaula's South Side. Cowikee Mills allowed workers to purchase their own homes and provided them with a variety of educational and recreational services. The workers' lives revolved primarily around church, school, and the mill "community house," located on South Eufaula Street. While contemporary scholars have often characterized such programs as paternalistic measures designed to maintain a docile, productive work force, the reality is that Cowikee Mills literally kept its workers, including many members of the presenter's own family, from starving to death during the Great Depression. |

## Civil War

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|  | **"Embattled and Embedded: Braxton Bragg, John Forsyth, and the Convenient Relationship between the Civil War Press and the Military,"**<br>Lonnie A. Burnett, Ph.D., University of Mobile |
| | Confederate General Braxton Bragg had no use for reporters. Suspicious of their intentions, wary of possible security breaches, and, perhaps most importantly, hyper-sensitive to criticism, Bragg had on more than one occasion ordered the removal and even the arrest of intruding correspondents. However when, in 1862, Bragg found himself bogged down in a daunting campaign to liberate Kentucky, he began to realize that the media could possibly be used in his favor. As a result of this epiphany, Bragg summoned his old friend John Forsyth of the Mobile Register. This presentation will consist of the important, yet often humorous, interaction between the two during |

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| | the abortive campaign to "free" the Bluegrass State. |

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| | **"Alabama Women Respond to the Union Occupation of North Alabama,"**<br>Joseph W. Danielson, Ph.D., Des Moines Community College |
| | This paper addresses Confederate women's response to the Union's 1862 occupation of the region. Union soldiers arrived in April of that year. As soldiers transitioned to an occupation force, they were expected to adhere to the Union's prevailing policy of conciliation, a strategy predicated on the belief that Confederate civilians had been duped into secession. With a large percentage of the region's male population in the Confederate army, Confederate women were in a precarious position: accept conciliation or reject their occupiers' overtures. While Confederate women were shocked by the enemy's arrival, their collective faith in their cause and that God favored the Confederacy provided them with the dogged determination to resist their occupiers' conciliatory tactics. For the next five months, these women engaged in activities that frustrated Union soldiers and put the Federals in harm's way. At the same time, these recalcitrant Rebels expected that their status as women would shield them from retaliation. Confederate women played a vital role in placing the 1862 occupation at the vanguard of the Union's realization that in addition to battlefield victories, crushing Confederate civilians' support for disunion would be necessary in order to win the war. |

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|  | **"The Production of Military Supplies at the Alabama State Penitentiary during the Civil War,"**<br>Brett J. Derbes, Auburn University |
| | The Alabama State Penitentiary in Wetumpka operated workshops using inmate labor throughout the antebellum era that converted to produce military supplies for Confederate soldiers during the Civil War. The penitentiary workshops contributed to Alabama's manufacturing and industrial capabilities, and utilized a cost-effective, available, and reliable source of labor. The inmates produced a variety of military supplies including knapsacks, shoes, wagon covers, and tents. Ultimately, the inmates manufactured $299,565.58 worth of supplies, and the wardens deposited at least $132,167.21 in the State Treasury. The inmates significantly contributed to the war effort and the Alabama Treasury throughout |

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| | the conflict. |

## Post-WWII Politics

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| | **"'Get that Damn Judge!' The Strange Career of James Hammonds, 1962-1968,"**<br>S. Jonathan Bass, Ph.D., Samford University |
| | From 1962 until 1968, James Hammonds served as the district attorney for the Bessemer Cut-off in Jefferson County. A vocal proponent of law and order, Hammonds gave the public the appearance of a prosecutor who enforced the law with fairness and justice. In private, however, Hammonds was the kingpin of an intricate web of illegal activities in Bessemer which included gambling, prostitution, drugs, and bootleg whiskey. When individuals stood in Hammonds's way, he arrested them on trumpet charges or used one of his hired thugs to discredit them through a host of nefarious schemes (bribery, extortion, beatings, character assassination, and murder). In 1966, Circuit Judge Gardner Goodwyn convened a Grand Jury in Bessemer to investigate Hammonds. In turn, the DA used his connections with the Gambino Crime Family in New York to contract a mafia hit on Judge Goodwyn. The Gambinos sent Bronx "restaurantuer" Rudy Pipolo to "get that damn judge" Gardner Goodwyn. The plot quickly unraveled when Bessemer Police officers grew suspicious of the 300-pound hit man walking the streets of Bessemer carrying a violin case. Within weeks, Jefferson County officials from Birmingham "invaded" the Bessemer court house and relieved Hammonds of his duties. |

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| | **"Fighting for the Promise: Alabama Democratic Conference Activists' Struggle for Fifteenth Amendment Rights, 1960-1970,"**<br>Lawrence U. McLemore, Auburn University |
| | The Alabama Democratic Conference (ADC) was organized in 1960 |

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| | to support the presidential ticket of John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson. The ADC grew and expanded in the years after 1960 to become the most influential statewide black political organization in the nation. Central to the ADC's mission since its inception has been the fulfillment of the promise of the Fifteenth Amendment (1870) and the realization of political equality in Alabama and the United States. Local activists, such as Rufus Lewis, Q. D. Adams, C. T. Gomillion, Joe Reed, and Jerome Gray, were schooled in the crucible of the civil rights movement in Alabama and applied the lessons they learned in building the ADC. ADC activists focused on local voter registration and mobilization and on helping black people gain influence within the structure of the white-dominated Alabama Democratic Party, including the first black delegates ever sent to represent Alabama at the Democratic National Convention. |

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| | **"Promises, Promises: Integration of the Alabama Democratic Delegation to the 1968 Convention,"**<br>Chriss H. Doss, Esq., Birmingham |
| | In 1968, as three groups contested to represent the state at the Democratic Convention in Chicago, the Executive Committee of the Democratic Party of Alabama scored a coup by winning admission of its first racially integrated delegation. Preparation for this coup dated back to 1966 when Democrats who did not support George Wallace's presidential campaigns determined that he would not win control of the state party and use it to advance his own presidential ambitions. These plans were set in motion by Robert S. Vance, chairman of the Alabama Democratic Party, and Chriss H. Doss, the presenter, who was serving as executive director of the party. This paper will present an "insider's account" of an important chapter in the state's modern political history. |

## Alabama Biography II

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|  | **"An Alabama Portrait of Henry Sheppard – Ethnographer, Geographer, Linguist, and the First Black Presbyterian Missionary in Africa,"**<br>Frances Osborn Robb, Huntsville |
| | A handsome, well-dressed, young black man points to the site of his mission on an enormous map of one quadrant of the Belgian Congo. Around him are artifacts from one of the most renowned kingdoms of the Old Congo: woven cloth, a carved headdress, and several swords. The man is Henry Sheppard, the first African-American to serve as a Presbyterian missionary in the heart of Africa, and one of the most famous black Americans of his day. On an American tour to raise money for his return, he had recently been elected to membership in the Royal Geographic Society in London (and recently introduced to Queen Victoria). This image, taken by the little-known Arthur S. Proctor, documented from 1890 to 1893 in Birmingham, is unique. . It is, on the one hand, a traditional portrait d'apparat – a likeness made with one's favorite things, the things that define and interest that individual – and it is, at the same time, one of the most striking portraits made in our state. |

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|  | **"James H. DeVotie and the Growth of Alabama Baptists,"**<br>Christopher Morgan Peters, Tuscaloosa |
| | From the beginning of his ministerial labors in 1831 to his death in 1891, James H. DeVotie led Baptists in Alabama and Georgia from a loosely-structured frontier revival movement to an organized regional establishment, shaping southern spiritual and cultural life right up to the |

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| | present. Specifically, DeVotie worked for the church's numerical growth, denominational organization, community influence and social prominence. He poured himself into building Baptist associations, establishing Howard College, overseeing Mercer University, launching The Alabama Baptist newspaper, developing the Alabama Baptist Bible Society, evangelizing through missions agencies, supporting Sabbath schools, and initiating public schools. During the first half of the century, he ministered in Montgomery, Tuscaloosa, and Marion, Alabama. Just before the Civil War, he relocated to Columbus and then Griffin, Georgia. He then served as the Corresponding Secretary for the Georgia Baptist Home Mission Board. Thus, DeVotie's life and ministry serve as a large, clear lens through which to view the transformation of Baptists in the South in the nineteenth century. |

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|  | **"The Burden of the Southern Historian: Frank Lawrence Owsley, Agrarianism, and the Plain Folk,"**<br>John J. Langdale, III, Ph.D., Andrew College |
| | This paper will examine Frank Owsley's vision of southern history from his participation in the Agrarian movement at Vanderbilt during the 1930s through the 1949 publication of *Plain Folk in the Old South*. Owsley, who was born in Montgomery County, attended Auburn and taught at the University of Alabama, was an integral part of the Nashville Agrarians, but as the lone academically trained historian among the twelve contributors to *I'll Take My Stand*, Owsley brought a unique perspective to the subject of the "the South and the Agricultural tradition." At the same time, Owsley, like fellow Agrarians John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate and Donald Davidson, wrestled with the question as to whether Agrarianism's principles had a practical political application or whether they aimed at what might be best described as the "mere affirmation of principle." The paper will probe the limitations and possibilities of Owsley's Agrarian vision and its final relation to his 1949 work *Plain Folk of the Old South*. |